

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

VOLUME XXII

ASHLAND, O., THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 1900

No. 10

## Announcements

The readers' attention is called to the announcements on page 14. The new Quarterly will be ready soon. There has been an increasing demand for "Lesson Leaves." We are glad to be able to supply this demand. Always and in each issue read the announcements on page 14.

## A Religion of Help Yourself

A Hindoo Swami, or teacher, is lecturing in New York, and in one of these lectures a short time since he expounded the five stages that lead to perfection. The most important of these five are: first, Shamon, tranquility of mind. Second, Domon, self-control. The last and highest is constant meditation on our own divinity. These principles of the ancient Vedas have a very respectable look, and if we did not know so much about the moral and intellectual degradation of the vast Indian populations, we might imagine that they had a religion of great uplifting power. As it is there is little in the history or in the present condition of the Indian peoples to justify their creed. One is unable to see a wide harvest of spiritual fruitage testifying to the divine vitality of the seed constantly sown by their voluminous scriptures. Matthew Arnold, the English poet, sang unctuously of "The Light of Asia," but the practical man who looks for facts has up to date been unable to discover anything dazzling in the moral and spiritual luminaries of that region, or in the progress and apparent destiny of the countless millions who dwell there. We may, it is true, extol these cardinal principles of their faith, and we do extol them constantly in the teaching of our religious institutions. Tranquility of mind, if based upon justifying grounds, is an unmeasured blessing. As to self control, who can estimate its value? That we are partakers of the divine nature, and that this fact should be constantly borne in mind as a perpetual inspiration to high and holy living, is one of the profoundest and richest truths of our holy religion. But all these states of mind and perfections of spirit must be based, can only be realized when they are based, upon facts which are not common to all religions, but are the exclusive property of that which the world knows as Christian. Tranquility of mind is but another name for peace. Not alone the peace which flows from material well being, but that peace which speaks an essential moral and spiritual harmony. It is a kind of tranquility or peace which is impossible to any man who is at variance with the moral law, and therefore at variance with, estranged from, Him who is the Embodiment of the moral law. The Hindoo Swami says: "Get it by willing it. It is the result of meditation. It is the delicious fruitage of philosophy." The Christian teacher says: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Here we see the only possible and logical *modus operandi*. There can be no peace, unless it is PEACE WITH GOD. We cannot attain

unto this peace as long as we are in debt to the moral law, and that debt must be removed by faith in Christ, who has discharged the debt for us. When by this act of faith we are brought into judicial and actual harmony with the fundamental Righteousness, then comes peace. Our past transgressions are blotted out, the accusers of our conscience are effectually silenced, and we have peace with God. This is the final peace which nothing can disturb, beneath which there is no false foundation threatening to tumble the temple into the dust; behind which there are no unsettled accounts hastening to upset the *real* "Shamon," tranquility of mind.

Domon, self-control, more philosophically written self-denial in the Word. At a glance we see the fundamental weakness of "Domon" as it is attempted in the Hindoo cult. They would have a man to exercise self control who by a previous defeat has no control at all. Some other very live and very effective agency has control, and orders his life as the devil pleases. In this tabernacle of his earthly house, the unregenerate man has been bound like a captive in the basement, the lower stories, the sensuous life, while the upper stories have been occupied and defiled by his tyrant conqueror. Led captive, in the whole trend of his impulses and aspirations, by the devil at his will, it is as idle to talk to him of self-control as it would be to talk to a planet of the beauties of some other orbit than the one to which it is confined by fixed and invariable laws; UNLESS, we begin at the beginning and substitute a higher and holier control than the one which now dominates him. The strong man armed keepeth his house, but now the stronger comes, the Strongest, who binds him and despoils him. As the essential ground of Christian self-control, the divine control must be pre-supposed and pre accomplished. The Holy Spirit must be put in possession. There is no Holy Spirit in the Vedantic philosophy.

Lastly the Swami invites us to meditate upon our own divinity. But how are we to meditate upon a possession that we do not possess or how are we to get it by the mere process of meditation? In effect he invites us to lift ourselves to heaven by pulling on our boot straps. It is as if a beggar might come into the estate of a Carnegie by simply meditating upon it. We might more rationally meditate upon our loss of divinity, for our Christian philosophy teaches that it was this divine inheritance that we lost in the first Adam. But it also teaches that we regain it by faith in Christ, the second Adam, because by this means we are made partakers of his divine nature. It is the free gift of a boundless generosity to a regenerative faith. It is not at all possible for a beggar to possess himself of Carnegie's wealth merely by the process of meditation, but it is entirely possible for Mr. Carnegie to bestow, by act of gift, his great wealth upon the beggar. By his own will and his own act God bestows upon us the divine nature. We become children of God, and when this glorious fact is accomplished in our hearts, our lives and our experience, it becomes us then to contemplate our divinity, to bear always in mind, and in all situations to act in harmony with a fact and a destiny so sublime.